

**HOLIDAY WRAP-UP** **Decorating the Theme Parks**



Disney's  
**HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS**

**Disney-MGM Studios History and its Hollywood Future**

Volume 1, Issue 2  
Feb. / March 2008

# ORLANDO **Attractions** M A G A Z I N E

**New Jungle for Busch Gardens**

**Disaster! Strikes Universal Studios**

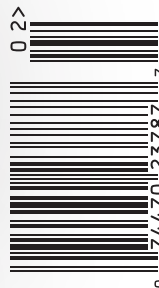
**Grosvenor Hotel gets a Regal Makeover**

**Dining with Detail at Disney's Yak & Yeti**

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# inside the MAGIC

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## DEPARTMENTS

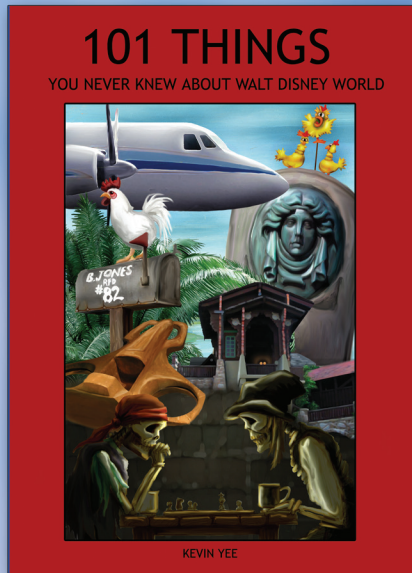
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# INDEPENDENT DISNEY BOOKS

BY AUTHOR KEVIN YEE

Enjoy trivia, insider tributes, and historical facts about Walt Disney World? Kevin Yee has spent twenty years working in, researching, and publishing about Disney theme parks.

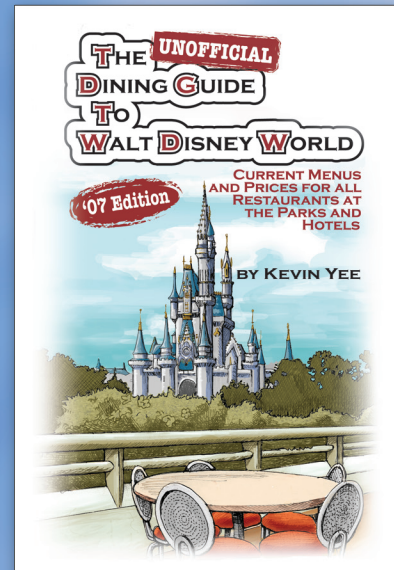


“101 Things You Never Knew About Walt Disney World” explores the many hidden tributes and references to bygone attractions that populate the theme parks. The individual 101 Things referenced by the title are all items you can actually point to at the parks, so that the book provides a kind of walking tour of the parks that yields a glimpse of the deeper history percolating below the surface.

“The Unofficial Dining Guide to Walt Disney World” is an indispensable reference tool for vacationers in Orlando, bringing you all the menus and individual prices from restaurants around Walt Disney World, including parks, hotels, and even Downtown Disney.

## FEATURES

- Updated several times a year
- Actual dollar amounts, not approximations
- Index of menu items at each park
- Index of nearby restaurants off-property



Kevin Yee is also the author of three books about Disneyland, the most recent being Mouse Trap (available in 2008), an intimate recounting of what a decade as a front-line worker at Disneyland looks like.

\*All books are on sale at Amazon.com or your local bookstore.  
For more information, visit [www.ultimateorlando.com](http://www.ultimateorlando.com)



# Letters



## Take Two

We'd like to thank all of our readers for making our premiere issue a success! We're excited that you're enjoying the magazine and know you'll love this issue at least as much as the last. Improvements are already here as we've made the issue more collectible on thicker paper. The puzzles (pg. 47) have been tweaked with a larger Spot the Difference game and new Mystery Photo where you can win a prize! We love reading your feedback so please keep sending it in. *Orlando Attractions Magazine* is truly a magazine for the fans and we want to make sure you enjoy every page.

*Ricky & Matt*

Ricky Brigante and Matt Roseboom  
Publishers and Orlando Fans

I have missed Disney Magazine since they stopped publication and I was hoping for something to replace that fun format. You all exceeded my expectations. I especially enjoyed the article on Epcot's 25th Anniversary. Keep up the good work and thank you!

Angie Hawkins  
Almo, Ky.

Congratulations on the first issue of *Orlando Attractions Magazine*, it's been my sole piece of morning toilet reading since I received it. You guys should be proud of yourselves!

One suggestion/request I have is that maybe you try shipping them with stiff cardboard on either side of the magazine like when you get a comic book. My mail carrier decided to bend the magazine in half to fit it in my mail box. I'm thinking that had it been sandwiched between some cardboard, he or she

would have just put it in the oversized mailboxes we have here for just that reason.

Anyway, love the magazine and can't wait for the next one.

Joey Green  
Orlando, Fla.

### CONGRATULATIONS

I really enjoyed the premiere issue of *Orlando Attractions Magazine*. I listen to several Disney podcasts and visit several Disney Web sites, so it's great to see what else is going on in the theme park world. Keep up the great work. I'll be looking forward to the next issue.

Michelle Class  
Littleton, Colo.

I just wanted to submit a quick note about the publication. I was a small magazine publisher from 1990-1996 and I certainly understand how difficult it is to launch a product and you guys have done a wonderful job. The quality is superb and I'm really impressed with the ad base you guys started with in the first issue.

I know that a lot of the time running a business you only hear the negative, not the positive, so I wanted to let you know that my wife and I think *Orlando Attractions Magazine* looks great and we look forward to future issues.

Eric Cohen  
Pharett, Ga.

***We're glad you liked it. Hopefully our thicker pages will now keep the post office from bending it too much.***

### MAGIC IN YOUR HEART

My first trip to Walt Disney World was way back in the 1970s. I was somewhere around 6 years old and can barely remember it now. My family and I returned in the early 1980s to see this new park that had just opened called Epcot.

It would be about 25 years later that I would return to Walt Disney World, this time with my own family. I knew Disney magic was pervasive and powerful, but I was not prepared for the incredible impact a week at Walt Disney World would have on my entire family. Yes it was the Year of a Million Dreams, but it

was more like the week of a hundred dreams for us. Everywhere we went, there was one magical moment after another (all without one glimpse of the Dream Squad).

The point is this: If you allow the magic inside your heart, it can and will bring back or enhance the child in you. In this day and age, we all could use a little more of what the DreamFinder gave Figment – some childish delight.

Chuck Lionberger  
Roanoke, Va.

### HAPPY, HAPPY, JOY, JOY

My wife Amy and I on our way to Cinderella's Royal Breakfast during our Disneymoon in 2005.

Ruben Trevino  
New Braunfels, Texas



### BEST THEME PARKS IN THE WORLD

I want to wish you all the best with the magazine. I also have a question. Coming from the Netherlands, I sometimes wonder if Americans realize they have the best theme parks in the world on their doorstep. I try to visit every year and love to visit all the parks. But the hotels are also an attraction in their own right. Are you going to feature articles about existing and new hotels? The same can be said about shopping. News and reviews about malls and shops would also be great.

Otto Tieleman  
Lienden, Netherlands



*Yes, not only are some of the world's best theme parks in the U.S.A., but what other city besides Orlando can boast having seven great theme parks in one city?*

*We've already started our regular Resort Report in each issue, but we don't have a regular feature on the area shops. But look for stories on the malls and other shops in future issues.*

## SO BEAUTIFUL

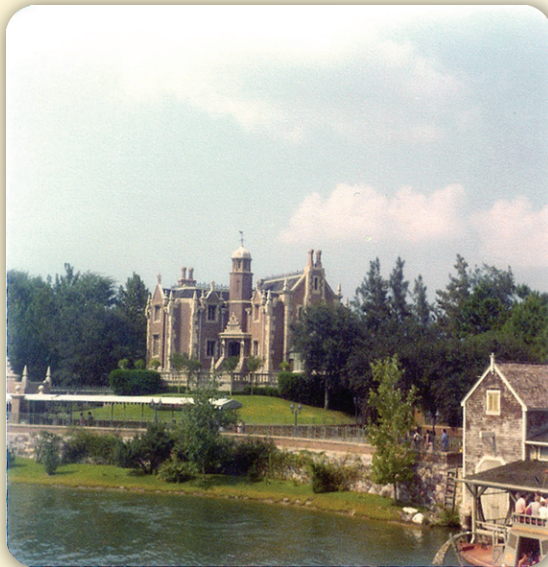
This photo is SSSOO beautiful it almost doesn't look real. Not that I'm a great photographer. I was just lucky on this one.

Diane McCornack  
Oklahoma City, Okla.



## REMEMBER WHEN...

In our last issue, we covered the recent changes to The Haunted Mansion at the Magic Kingdom. This photo, taken sometime during the 1970s by Jack and Karen Moss, shows how the Mansion's exterior grounds have changed since the attraction's opening. In those days, it was fairly easy to see the forboding building from a great distance in Liberty Square with no obstructions. Now, a large red queue covering and purposely overgrown foliage block the ominous view seen here.



## EARTHQUAKE IMPROVED

I managed to get into the newly revamped Disaster (formerly Earthquake) over at Universal Studios. The attraction flows along much slicker; "Moving On!" as the director kept reminding us. Christopher Walken is now the star of the attraction and the way he has been implemented into the attraction is very well done, almost to the point that it is a believable person on the stage. The earthquake scene hasn't changed much, but a couple of touches that include the audience extras is much more entertaining than the previous ride.

I've got to say well done Universal, but as this is just another revamp, isn't it about time we had new additions. I know Harry Potter is on the way, but the Studios needs something new too.

Chris Carter  
London, England

*We agree! Check out our full Disaster! article on page 44.*

## DINING WITH AN IMAGINEER

This was my first encounter with Kevin James, senior graphic designer at Walt Disney Imagineering. We tried the Dine

with the Imagineer promotion and had a great time asking him questions and listening to him sharing his experience. We ate lunch at the Hollywood Brown Derby at Disney's Hollywood Studios. We left with such gifts as a name tag that shows your name as well as the caption "I dined with an Imagineer." We also received a commemorative personalized plate.

Ryan Geary  
Danvers, Mass.



*Dining with a Disney Imagineer is a little known fun dining option. Lunch is available at the Hollywood Brown Derby (\$60.99 per person) and dinner is available at the Artist Point restaurant at the Wilderness Lodge (\$109 per person).*

## TRAVEL TIP

When you go to Mission: Space, please eat after the ride so you won't get sick.

Jeany Sanchez  
Miami, Fla.

*Thanks for the tip. Sometimes the most obvious things are overlooked during long days at the theme parks.*

## DISNEY PROPOSALS

I had booked a table at the California Grill where I asked my girlfriend to marry me, which she accepted. The actual proposal was done on the balcony, which had an amazing view, which made the moment more special. The food was great and the night was topped off by the Wishes fireworks. The staff knew about the proposal and took some pictures and gave us some souvenir photos and the dessert had congratulations in icing on a slab of chocolate.

Our experience with Disney was made even more special when we became winners in the year of a million dreams promotion, not once but



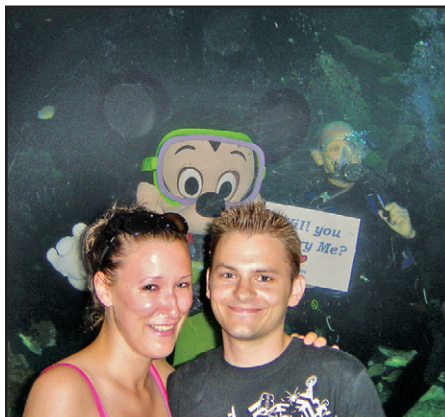
twice. First in Epcot, we were among the first few people to ride Soarin' and we received Disney Dream Fast Passes. We were later told that only 100 people receive these each day, so we felt quite special. We won another Dream Fast Pass when we visited Magic Kingdom on our last day of the holiday. This was given out on Goofy's Barnstormer. I had to drag my fiance onto Goofy's Barnstormer as she wasn't too keen on going on a kid's roller coaster. She was definitely glad when we won.

Richard Gibbons  
England

While my girlfriend was in the restroom during our dinner at the Coral Reef at Epcot, I arranged with the manager to bring over a flower arrangement with a glass slipper and the ring inside right after appetizers.



At the same time, a diver was supposed to come by the aquarium window with a "Will You Marry Me?" sign. Everything was going well until every child in the place crowded the far end of the glass, and I immediately feared the sign was in the wrong spot at the wrong time. It turned out, diver Mickey was swimming by. Soon after, everything looked to be going good until my girlfriend decided to excuse herself right after the appetizers were cleared. I feared she'd miss the sign entirely,



but luckily the manager noticed her absence, and said she'd call the divers as soon as she returned.

She soon came back to the table when she noticed scuba Mickey coming back, right towards us. He came to the glass and blew a few kisses. Suddenly two divers appeared on either side of him, and unrolled the sign. I got down on one knee, and took the ring from the slipper that the manager was holding for me right behind her. Of course she said yes, and the whole restaurant applauded for us. It couldn't have worked out any better. Later, a waiter told us that scuba Mickey only comes around every six months or so, and mostly for private parties. He happened to be in the tank at the time, and decided to help with the proposal.

Jason Muhr  
St. Charles

***Congratulations! Readers, send us your special moment stories from any Orlando attraction.***

## STITCHING AT THE STUDIOS

This is a panorama of Curious George Goes To Town in Universal Studios (below). Basically, I've just stitched about seven camera phone images



together to get an overall look at the place. I hope you like it.

Rob Leather  
Manchester, UK

***That's a good way to get a nice large image from your cell phone. Readers, send us your photo tips and examples.***

## MMMMMM

This is quite possibly the best dessert on Disney property. It's cheesecake with caramel sauce and treats from the Sci-Fi Diner.

Michael Lawler  
Anaheim, Calif.



***Wow, looks great. OK readers, what's your favorite dessert at the parks?***

## We want to hear from you!

Whether it's a comment about the magazine or a story from your last trip to Orlando, we want to read all about it, so please write to us. If possible, please include pictures with your letters, as they make the text that much more interesting!

## Send us your letters and photos!

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**For letters and photos,** be sure to include your first and last name and your city and state. Letters may be edited.

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# Vacation Planner

## JANUARY

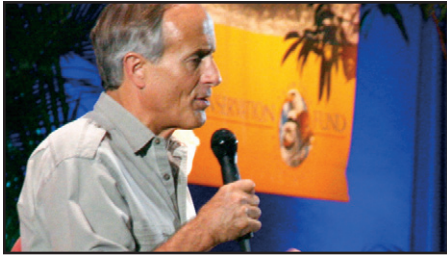
### 5 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.

Chubby Checker, 3 p.m.

**6 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Mel Tillis, 3 p.m.

**10 Irish Thunder.** The spirit of Ireland ignites the stage with a step dancing spectacular at Busch Gardens. Runs **through March 30**.

**12 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Willie Nelson, 3 p.m.



**12 - 13 Green goes "blue" at SeaWorld.** Conservation event featuring dance, music, art and animals. Appearing will be animal ambassadors Jack Hanna and Julie Scardina, and artist Wyland.

**13 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** The Turtles featuring Flo and Eddie & The Buckinghams, 3 p.m.

**17 - 20 Big Band Concert Series at Busch Gardens.** The Les Brown Band of Renown featuring Les Brown, Jr.

**18 Kid Stuff: Great Toys from Our Childhood** at The Orange County Regional History Center. Runs **through April 13**.

**19 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** John Conlee's Country Music Caravan with Special Guests Janie Fricke and Johnny Lee, 3 p.m.

**19 - 20 Green goes "blue" at SeaWorld.** Conservation event featuring dance, music, art and animals. Appearing will be animal ambassadors Jack Hanna and Julie Scardina, and artist Wyland.

**20 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Larry Gatlin & The Gatlin Brothers, 3 p.m.



**21 Disney's Pirate and Princess Party** at the Magic Kingdom. 7 p.m. to midnight. Also on **Jan. 26, 29; Feb. 2, 5, 9, 14, 22, 26; March 1, 6, 11, 14**.

**24 - 27 Big Band Concert Series at Busch Gardens.** The Terry Myers Orchestra featuring Peter Appleyard.

**26 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Miranda Lambert, 3 p.m.

**27 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** The Elvis Presley Story featuring Ronnie McDowell, The Jordanares, DJ Fontana, and Millie Kirkham, 3 p.m.

**29 ESPN The Weekend** at Disney's Hollywood Studios. Runs **through March 2**.

**31 - Feb. 3 Big Band Concert Series at Busch Gardens.** The Glenn Miller Orchestra.

## FEBRUARY



**2 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios.** Featuring Bret Michaels of Poison in concert.

**2 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Kenny Rogers, 3 p.m.

**3 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Pat Boone, 3 p.m.

**9 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios.**

Featuring Go-Go's in concert.

**9 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Ray Price with Special Guest Connie Smith, 3 p.m.

**7 - 10 Big Band Concert Series at Busch Gardens.** The Artie Shaw Orchestra featuring Dick Johnson.

**10 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Pam Tillis, 3 p.m.

**16 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios.** Featuring Sara Evans in concert.

**16 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Loretta Lynn, 3 p.m.

**23 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios.** Featuring Third Eye Blind in concert.

**23 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** George Jones, 3 p.m.

**24 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Bill Haley's Comets & The Knockouts, 3 p.m.

**29 The Atlanta Braves** begin their **spring training** season in a game against the Los Angeles Dodgers. Games continue at Disney's Wide World of Sports **various days until March 27**.

## MARCH

**1 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Clay Walker and Heartland, 3 p.m.

**1 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios.** Featuring Gretchen Wilson in concert.

**2 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** BJ Thomas, 3 p.m.

**8 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Restless Heart, 3 p.m.

**8 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios.**

Featuring Smokey Robinson in concert.

**9 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Wayne Newton, 3 p.m.

**13 - 16 Real Music Series at Busch Gardens.** The Lettermen.

**15 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Frankie Avalon, Bobby Rydell, & Fabian, 3 p.m.

**15 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios.** Featuring Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons in concert.

**16 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Oak Ridge Boys, 3 p.m.



**19 Flower & Garden Festival at Epcot.** Runs **through June 1**.

**22 Eggstravaganza!** The World's Largest Easter Egg Hunt at Cypress Gardens, 3 p.m.

**22 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios.**

Featuring Kool & The Gang in concert.

**27 - 30 Real Music Series at Busch Gardens.** Orleans.

**29 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Sammy Kershaw, 3 p.m.

**29 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios.**

Featuring Heart in concert.

**30 Concert Series at Cypress Gardens.** Beach Boys, 3 p.m.



**30 WWE presents Wrestlemania XXIV** at the Florida Citrus Bowl, 6:30 p.m.

*All events and dates are subject to change. Please check with the proper organization before attending.*





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# Work in Progress ?

## Modern Changes

LOCATION: DISNEY'S CONTEMPORARY RESORT

■ STATUS: UNDER CONSTRUCTION

One of Disney's oldest Orlando hotels, the Contemporary Resort, has been receiving a much-needed makeover during the last few months. Changes generally surround the notion of making the entire hotel fit its name once again. In the main concourse of the giant A-frame building now lies a new open-air shop.



Adjacent to the new store, below the monorail track running through the hotel, is the newly relocated arcade. The hotel's restaurants are also receiving an update (see Trend Tracker, pg. 14) as well as the hotel's rooms.



The most noticeable change lies outside of the main building where a large C-shaped structure is being constructed (above), rumored to be a new addition to Disney's Vacation Club.

## Your Return to Earth

LOCATION: EPCOT

■ STATUS: IN THE WORKS

**Spaceship Earth**, Epcot's most recognizable landmark, is currently wrapping up an extensive refurbishment featuring new scenes (like the computer room pictured here)



and lifelike Audio-Animatronics. Previews of the attraction have been ongoing since December, but it won't be complete until mid-February. Visit [attractionsmagazine.com](http://attractionsmagazine.com) for a ride video from the previews and look for complete coverage in our next issue.

## The Mania Continues

LOCATION: DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

■ STATUS: UNDER CONSTRUCTION

**Toy Story Mania** construction progresses but without anything different on the outside. No opening date has been set, but nearby signs point to Summer 2008. Viewers of Disney's televised Christmas day parade could catch a brief glimpse at working ride vehicles in action. Video and pictures can be found on the official web site: [toystorymania.com](http://toystorymania.com).



## Even Pets Deserve Disney Magic

LOCATION: WALT DISNEY WORLD

■ STATUS: IN THE WORKS

**Pet owners** can relax during their next trip to Walt Disney World as Disney and Best Friends Pet Care have teamed up to offer near-luxury accommodations for furry family members (that's pets, not humans with bad hygiene). Existing Walt

Disney World kennels (like the Magic Kingdom one seen here) will transition to Best Friends Pet Care management over the next couple of months. Pet owners will have to wait until 2009 for the new luxury pet facility to open.





## Signs of Progress

LOCATION: SEAWORLD ORLANDO

**Aquatica**, SeaWorld's latest project, is set to open in March 2008, so it may very well be open by the time you read this. At the time of printing, however, the only noticeable sign of progress is the large one posted outside the location of the new water park. There doesn't appear to be any water in Aquatica quite yet, but we're sure it will arrive soon.



■ STATUS:  
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

## Store's Open, Surf's Up

LOCATION: PLEASURE ISLAND

**Curl by Sammy Duvall**, a new high-end shop offering a selection of trendy surf-wear and accessories, plus skate boards, surf boards and other water-related sports gear, recently opened at Downtown Disney Pleasure Island. During his competitive career, Sammy Duvall was one of the most accomplished water skiers in the world, and he was inducted into the International water ski hall of fame and the USA water ski hall of fame.



■ STATUS:  
COMPLETED

## Mystery Solved

LOCATION:  
WALT DISNEY WORLD

Mickey's Mystery Pin Machine made its debut throughout Walt Disney World in September of 2007 with a variety of new trading pins exclusive to these machines. Now, six months later, the machines have left the parks and the pins are available at cash registers throughout the resort as less-mysterious \$1 additions to \$30 purchases.



■ STATUS:  
REMOVED

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## On FIRE

The HOTTEST trend around.



### Epcot - Japan - Teppan Edo & Tokyo Dining

One of Epcot's most popular World Showcase spots, the restaurants in the Japan pavilion, closed for nearly all of 2007 to make way for a new and improved dining experience. Tokyo Dining adds the excitement of expertly prepared sushi in addition to their existing tempura offerings in a new open floor plan. Like the old Teppanyaki Dining Room, Teppan Edo still lets you watch your chef flip shrimp into his hat while he creates a flaming onion volcano. When we say this restaurant is "on fire," we mean it quite literally.



### Tutto Italia

The award for the most confusing restaurant change goes to Epcot's Tutto Italia, formerly Alfredo di Roma, now under new management with a new menu that will soon change along with the restaurant's name again in 2008. Got it?



### Nine Dragons Aren't Enough

Epcot's indoor Chinese restaurant, Nine Dragons, will follow Japan's lead for a year-long makeover in 2008. New additions include an exhibition kitchen and hopefully an often-requested menu update with more authentic Chinese cuisine.



### Temporary to Permanent

The Contemporary Resort is currently becoming modern again with room renovations and dining changes. The Tempo-Grab-N-Go temporarily replaces the old food court until the Concourse Steakhouse moves, leaving space for a new, permanent counter-service eatery.

## Think you know what's hot?

Send us your picks and pictures telling us about the latest theme park trends: [trendtracker@attractionsmagazine.com](mailto:trendtracker@attractionsmagazine.com)



### ¡Hola, mis amigos!

The San Angel Inn inside Epcot's Mexico pavilion is one of the most relaxing spots around the World Showcase... and it's about to get even more relaxing with the addition of an "outdoor" (actually indoor) tequila bar in 2008. ¡Salud!

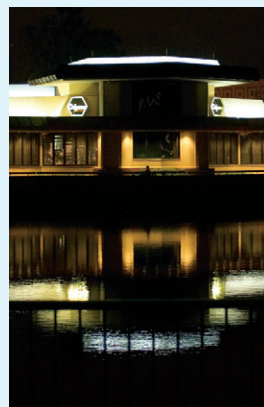


### Food Service Fusion

The former All-Star Cafe recently reopened as Disney's Wide World of Sports Cafe. Now you can efficiently order at a counter and watch TV at a table while your food is brought to you.

## cooled off

This one's all but melted.



### The Odyssey

This Epcot restaurant is still majorly stuck in the '70s. We know Epcot wasn't even built in the '70s, but The Odyssey's decor begs to differ. This location hasn't been used as a restaurant for several years but rumors point to a refurbishment soon.



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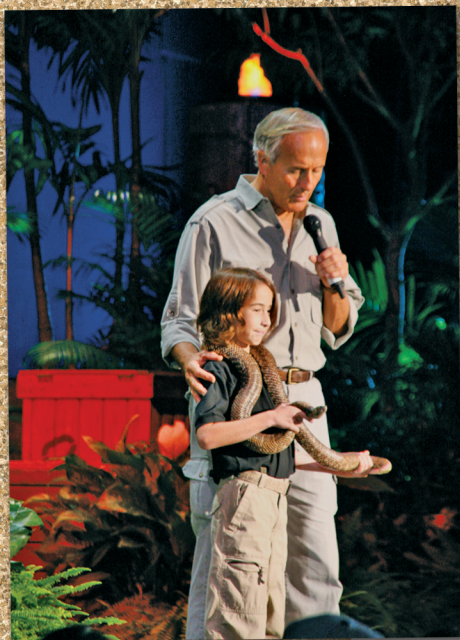


# Photo Finds

Orlando is filled with fun things to see, and our photographers are there to capture it all.



Downtown Disney held their annual **Festival of the Masters** weekend in November. The event showcased artists of all kinds. Many chalk artists showed off their work in the Marketplace, while the West Side held the main art show.



SeaWorld and Busch Gardens both held **Jack Hanna Weekend** in November. The Columbus, Ohio zoo director and his helpers brought out many different animals to show the crowds.



Walt Disney World held a press event outside their Casting Center on Dec. 12 to announce **plans for a Health and Wellness Center**. The center will be built backstage behind Epcot, allowing Disney Cast Members easy access to basic health services without leaving Disney property.







Abraham Lincoln's hat is now on display at Epcot's new **National Treasures exhibit**, which also includes items from Thomas Edison, Jackie Robinson and many others. The items on display will change periodically.



The annual **ABC Super Soap Weekend** was held at Disney-MGM Studios in November, drawing thousands of fans to see their favorite stars like Melissa Claire Egan (top) and Susan Lucci (right).



**MouseFest**, an annual gathering of Disney fans on a Disney cruise and at Walt Disney World, was held in December. Pictured here are *Orlando Attractions Magazine* co-owners, Matt Roseboom (left) and Ricky Brigante.



**Epcot's Innoventions** received an exterior makeover with bright, bold new colors and signs. Seen here entering the building are guests returning from one of Epcot's Segway-based park tours.

**WWE wrestler Mick Foley and wrestling manager Jimmy Hart** met with fans at Universal's CityWalk on Nov. 17 to promote *Wrestlemania 24*, to be held at the Citrus Bowl in Orlando on March 30.





# THE SIMPSONS INVADE UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

RIDE DETAILS EMERGE AS OPENING DAY NEARS

BY SIMON VENESS







**G**et ready to laugh – a lot – when The Simpsons becomes the latest attraction at Universal Studios in March.

That's the message from Universal producer Mike West in an exclusive interview with

*Orlando Attractions Magazine*, as he reveals the latest developments with the park's eagerly awaited new ride.

Not only will The Simpsons ride take another step forward in cutting-edge attraction technology, but it is promised to be an absolute mirth-fest in the best Springfield style.

When Universal officially announced their headline collaboration with

Simpsons creator Matt Groening and Fox TV back in April 2007, it simply confirmed the long-held rumor that TV's most dysfunctional family was headed to Orlando as a replacement for the Back to the Future ride, which closed in 2007.

The announcement was made in a blaze of publicity in Anaheim, Calif. during the annual Pow-Wow travel convention, and then – nothing. Everyone



vain for more details on this headline new attraction. Until now.

Mike West, executive producer, Universal Creative Studio, has been in the attractions business for 27 years as a writer, director and producer for theme parks around the world.

"I used to be a DJ years ago and I have done a lot of voice-over work," said West. "I can do a good Krusty the Clown, but not Homer. It has been a pretty wild ride, but I have had the great pleasure to work on a lot of wonderful shows in the past."

He has been with Universal for almost two years now, primarily on the Simpsons attraction, having been working on a freelance basis when the opportunity came along. "It took me about two seconds to say 'Sure' when they offered me the job, but my skin is now starting to turn a strange tint of yellow."

Regular visitors to Universal Studios have seen the ongoing development of the old Back to the Future plaza as it takes on a full Simpsons identity, complete

with the fun Kwik-E-Mart store on the southern approach. The visual style is classic Groening and park-goers can be in no doubt about who now resides here.

The overall style is pure Springfield, from the sale of Squishees (yes, really) to the ads for products like Krusty O's cereal and 'I Can't Believe It's Not Lard' ('Now with 50% more lard!'). But there has been little actual news of what is going on behind the main hoardings where the old Back to the Future building is clearly being transformed, both inside and out.

While head honcho West was careful not to divulge the actual story line of what we can expect in March, he was able to provide a much clearer idea of what the overall experience will be like, including some of the technological wizardry that is going into the ride, and he promised it will be "one surprise after another."

Among the little gems of information is the fact that the attraction will feature some physical special effects as well as visual ones; the ride simulator will be a



**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MIKE WEST TAKES A MOMENT TO ENJOY A SQUISHEE OUTSIDE THE FUTURE HOME OF THE SIMPSONS ATTRACTION.**

dynamic and wild one; the film projection will be unlike anything we've seen before; and none of the building's original theme will remain internally.

"If you can imagine, the Simpsons have decided to visit the amusement park created by Krusty the Clown and we, as the guests, go along for the ride," explained West, "and we go along on a very wild and funny adventure. We go through a number of thrill rides, dark rides and other adventures.

"This is an opportunity for our guests to really experience an attraction like no other. They will be there side by side with the Simpsons, and you will see them in a whole new light. In fact, the most exciting thing for us is that our guests will be there on a one-to-one basis with Homer, Marge, Bart and company.

"For the ride itself, expect a lot of ups and downs! It is a simulated experience obviously, that is the genesis of the main show. But we are using a new presentation which has never been done before on this

## The World of Springfield

The mythical world of Springfield is sprinkled with pop culture satire of all kinds, from its own cartoon series *The Itchy & Scratchy Show* and Bart's "Eat My Shorts" trademark insult to outrageous supermarket products like Krusty Burgers and Squishees.

Universal guests will even be able to try Squishees for themselves - although they will be more like 7-Eleven's signature Slurpees than the occasionally nauseating Springfield variety. The fictional versions



are known for being dangerous to health - flavorings have, if ingested in sufficient quantities, hallucinatory properties while, according to the Simpsons comic, Squishees allegedly contain no natural ingredients (not even pure water), create dangerous cases of brain freeze (Homer Simpson is apparently immune) and are described as a "thick, gloopy, tooth-rotting mixture of crushed ice and syrup." You have been warned!





scale. It has a number of surprises, both visual and physical, that people haven't experienced before, and the way it is presented, along with the wackiness and humor, puts a different twist on everything that is going on."

The key to the new attraction will be the state-of-the-art projection system, which Universal has been pioneering with the creative folks from Fox TV and Gracie Films, the movie company set up by Simpsons co-creator James L. Brooks.

Unlike the Back To The Future ride, which was a pure film presentation, its replacement significantly raises the bar in projection terms by going all-digital. And this has created some extra challenges for West and his team.

"It is like comparing old VHS TV with the new HDTV with all the extra clarity involved," he said. "What that does is bring the characters to life in a completely different way. With digital imagery, we also have a whole new color palette to play with, and we are bringing that all to an 80-foot screen.

"Just as when Fox and Gracie Films worked on *The Simpsons Movie* to bring these characters to life on the big screen, we have to be careful with the scale. We have 4K projectors, which is the brightness level, and these translate the images in a clarity and brightness seldom seen.

"Unlike the look and feel of Back To The Future, which was very dark, this will be a full 180 degrees from that. This is going to be very colorful and bright.

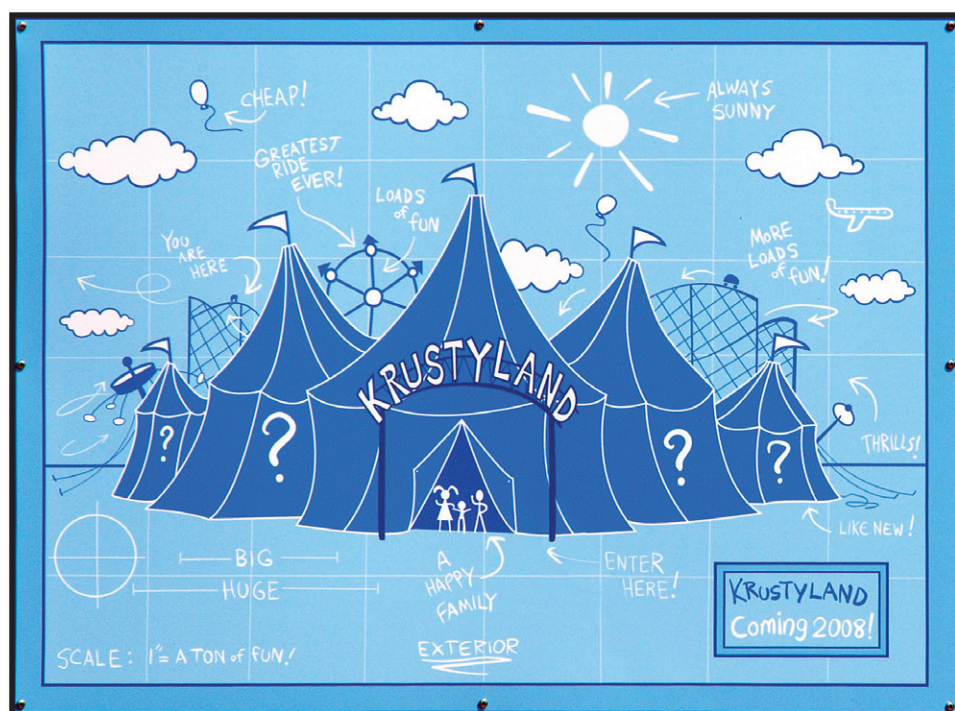
That created another challenge in that we can't have any visible flaws at all. So, to be perfect, we needed a whole new screen surface and we had to find the basic ways to do that.

"Everything is new, therefore. The projection system, the projection surface, the sound system – we will have a brand-new musical score, too – even the server storage is one of a kind and had to be developed for this attraction. I can't in all conscience say it is the only one in the world, but we know we are pushing the boundaries of digital technology and it is all on a scale people have never seen

before."

The biggest appeal, though, will surely be the characters – and the essential Simpsons humor – as Universal creates the first permanent home for the world's most successful and longest-running animated TV show.

And West admits this is the main excitement – and their main concern – behind the whole project. "The biggest challenge is meeting the expectations of the guests, and there is a great responsibility on us with the way we go with a program like the Simpsons. They are so beloved that you want to match the feeling that



**THIS SIGN AND ONE IN THE KWIK-E-MART (TOP) WERE EARLY CLUES AS TO WHAT THE RIDE WOULD FEATURE: NONE OTHER THAN KRUSTYLAND!**



the guests have in advance.

"It's a make-believe world where we place you in the middle of all this, and we still have to make it believable. But I feel very strongly that we have got that feeling. It is something we have done very successfully before, notably in collaboration with DreamWorks and our Shrek attraction. That is one of our strengths – we go right to the creative source.

"We also have to make sure it is a great experience whether you know the Simpsons 100 percent or not. We have to ask ourselves, 'Is it a great guest experience?'"

Ultimately, it is Universal's collaboration with Groening, Brooks and company that will determine how well the new attraction is received, which brings the conversation back to the subject of their secret weapon – the story.

But, while West is keen to reveal some of the technology and other surprises in store, he is absolutely resolute in revealing nothing of what the Simpsons

writers have in store for us – although his hints are tantalizing.

"Hopefully one of the great surprises for our guests will be that this is a whole new episode with brand new animation," he added. "It's a new story that is coming from the masters themselves, with all the characters being voiced by the original team. The attention to detail on their characters to make sure they stay true to their personalities is astonishing.

"There is no aspect of this attraction that hasn't had their attention at some stage and it really is a huge team effort.

"In my 27 years in the business, the story is the basis of everything; it involves emotion and great memories and that is what you want your guests to leave



## Giants of TV (and movie screen)

*The Simpsons* was created by Matt Groening for the Fox Broadcasting Company and was first shown in December 1989. It is currently in its 19th season and is the longest-running animated TV series of all time.

It was originally developed by Groening

with producer James L. Brooks as a series of animated shorts on *The Tracey Ullman Show* in 1987 and ran for three seasons.

*The Simpsons Movie*, long-rumored and finally created as a feature-length film, was released worldwide in 2007.



THE SIMPSONS RV CAN BE SEEN BRINGING THE CHARACTERS TO THEIR DAILY APPEARANCES.



with – along with a great sense of humor and a thrill ride that will bring them back again and again. For a great ride has to have repeatability, and there will be details you need to come back to see next time.”

At the time of this writing, the show was still in production, which means the final script was not set in stone and there may still be a few tweaks here and there. But the bulk of the attraction is now complete, much of the huge rebuilding of the old structure has been completed and they are firmly on course for a March opening.

The visual trademarks of the Simpsons are firmly in evidence and, looking across the lagoon to the former Back To The Future plaza in the World Expo area, there is absolutely no doubt as to who is now in residence.

And West concluded: “We have great characters to start with; we have a wonderful new storyline and a lot of little surprises and twists that will leave you with a sense of awe at having



THE TRANSITION FROM BACK TO THE FUTURE TO THE SIMPSONS BECOMES OBVIOUS AS CHARACTER-ADORNED CONSTRUCTION WALLS AND NEW VIBRANT PAINT APPEAR AROUND THE ATTRACTION BUILDING.

been part of it. I think people will feel exhilarated by it all – and their funny bone will hurt!” ●●●●●

**For more of The Simpsons, head to our web site at:**  
**[www.attractionsmagazine.com](http://www.attractionsmagazine.com)**



## Apu's Merchandise Paradise

The most popular shopping destination in all of Springfield is the convenience store known as the Kwik-E-Mart. Universal couldn't bring the world of The Simpsons to life without building one of their own, located just outside the attraction building.

Instead of overpriced (and expired) beef jerky, this Kwik-E-Mart sells every kind of Simpsons swag imaginable, from bobble-heads to board games. Any fan of The Simpsons entering the store will immediately exclaim, “Best.Store.Ever.”





# Going *Back* in *Time*...

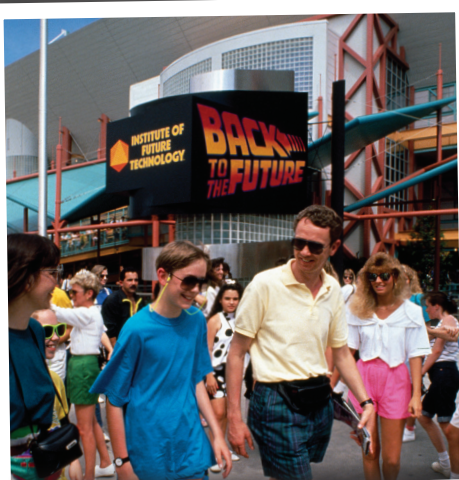
**U**niversal Studios Orlando's *Back to the Future* attraction launched on May 2, 1991, reuniting the characters of Dr. Emmett Brown and Biff Tannen for a new time-traveling adventure starring the film trilogy's original actors. The attraction was set at the Institute of Future Technology, where Doc Brown was working on his latest creation, the eight-passenger time-traveling DeLorean.

Of course, Biff messes with the Doc's plans and Doc ends up recruiting visiting guests on a high-flying adventure through time to catch him.

The Orlando attraction officially closed its gull-wing doors on March 30, 2007, followed by its California counterpart a few months later. The *BTTF* attraction in Universal Studios Japan remains open for now.



*Back to the Future The Ride* was immensely popular as long as it was open, as evidenced by the long lines still present just three months prior to its closing (pictured left). The experience began outside the Institute of Future Technology (far left, taken in the early 90s), continued into the pre-show area (lower-left) complete with encased Hoverboard, and culminated in an exciting DeLorean ride through the history and future of the fictional city of Hill Valley (above).



Some photos ©1991, Universal City Studios, Inc. & Amblin Entertainment.  
Courtesy of BTTF.com. Cartoon by Joey Ellis.



**S**tephen Clark, one of *Back to the Future*'s biggest fans, talks to *Orlando Attractions Magazine* about the movie trilogy and the 2007 closing of the Universal Studios attractions based on the films.

**Q: How long have you been a Back to the Future fan?**

**A:** I've been a fan from the very beginning. I first saw the film on July 5, 1985 – just four days before I popped the question to my girlfriend at a Rick Springfield concert. My wife's been, characteristically, a very patient woman over the past two decades.

**Q: When and how did you start BTTF.com?**

**A:** The history of BTTF.com dates back to the summer of 1992 when I began operating a fan club for the series. I was, of course, a huge fan of the movies ... but after a trip to Universal Studios Florida in early 1992 to take my maiden flight in a DeLorean time machine via *Back To The Future – The Ride*, I slipped into full geek-mode. I began publishing a quarterly magazine (*Hill Valley Telegraph*) ... Going online was the natural progression of those earlier efforts.

**Q: Do you have a favorite moment from the ride?**

**A:** I'm very good friends with actor Tom Wilson, so the moment Biff is on screen, I'm grinning ear-to-ear throughout the show. Start to finish.

**Q: Do you own any ride memorabilia?**

**A:** I do own one unique collectible – the actual film prop of Doc Brown's "deep thinking, mind-reading helmet" which you see Christopher Lloyd put on during the pre-show. It's one of my prized possessions from the entire series.

**Q: What was your reaction to hearing that the ride would be removed?**

**A:** Extremely disappointed and a deep feeling of betrayal, but I can't say that I was too surprised at all. My last trip to Orlando was in February 2006 and Universal had absolutely let the ride fall apart.

**Q: Do you think *The Simpsons* is a good replacement?**

**A:** I have nothing specific against *The Simpsons*, but I simply don't think it makes good business sense at all to close an attraction based upon a property/franchise that Universal owns to replace it with an attraction based upon a property/franchise that they do not own. The park is already full of attractions that are not Universal Studios properties.

**Q: What will you miss most about the ride?**

**A:** That there was a physical place where fans could go to actually put themselves into the movie. Fans flocked to Orlando for 16 years because it was a real place they could go and see real film props from the movies, and actually sit inside a DeLorean time machine and fly across the space-time continuum. I'll miss being able to do that with my children. Both of my kids had the opportunity to ride it, so now all they and I have are memories.



Photos courtesy of BTTF.com

Stephen Clark, Creative Director of BTTF.com, is seen above with *Back to the Future* cast and crew members (top to bottom) Claudia Wells (Jennifer Parker in *BTTF1*), Jeffrey Weissman (replaced actor Crispin Glover as George McFly in *BTTF2* and *BTTF3*), Bob Gale (Writer/Producer), Christopher Lloyd (Dr. Emmett Brown), Tom Wilson (Biff, Griff, and Buford Tannen), and Lea Thompson (Lorraine Baines McFly).

For more of our chat with Stephen Clark, visit us online at:  
**<http://www.attractionsmagazine.com>**



# COMING TO BUSCH GARDENS: Jump into the jungle at **JUNGALA**

BY KEVIN YEE



Photos courtesy of Busch Gardens

**W**hether encountering orangutans face to face up in the branches, flying through the canopy on zip lines past shrieking gibbons or watching tigers play tug of war, visitors to Busch Garden's newest land may soon find themselves nervously contemplating where their space ends and the animal enclosures begin.

Jungala, opening Spring 2008, will combine new ride experiences with animal encounters and immersive themed environments. The multi-level animal habitats intertwine with mazes, crawl nets, and play zones to invite exploration and discovery.

Built in the Congo area of the Tampa park, Jungala occupies a space formerly home to the Monstrous Mamba spinning ride and the Python roller-coaster, both of which closed in late 2006 to prepare for this expansion. In addition to numerous animal exhibits, the \$16 million expansion will offer four acres of lush landscaping, a village for shopping and dining, and two rides.

Mark Rose, vice president of design and engineering, points out that the heart of

the new land will be the animal exhibits. The park's orangutans and Bengal tigers will move into fancy new digs, where they will be joined by gibbons, flying foxes, and exotic crocodilians. Visitors can see the tigers swimming from a special underwater viewing area, or they could view the tiger enclosure from an air-conditioned facility that can function as a classroom or even house sleep overs.

Such close animal encounters will add up to an experience, according to Rose,

"like nothing you can do anywhere else in a theme park on earth." Visitors can climb out on a tree limb, for instance, which will extend into the orangutan enclosure, separated only by a wall of glass. Below them, visitors may spy other orangutans resting on a different platform. The animals will play too: orangutans will paint and tigers will play tug of war, separated from the guests only by a glass wall.

Interaction is key to the design of Jungala. Rose said that the desire for



**Conceptual overview of Jungala.**



interactivity grew out of listening to Busch visitors. "Parents told us how important it is to them that we offer an area of true family appeal. We focused on building an experience that allows parents to interact and explore with their kids, not just watch them passively."

The two rides in Jungala adhere to the same philosophy of appealing to a wide audience. Jungle Flyers, a zip line ride with three separate tracks through the sky, allows riders to race 35 feet above the ground up to 15 MPH, weaving around and through animal exhibits before returning to their starting place. To capture the realism of the experience, park designers shot footage in the jungles of Ecuador. The tentative height requirement to ride Jungle Flyers is 48 inches.

Tucked inside a caldera with a waterfall cascading down one side, Wild Surge is a "space shot" style ride that will launch 14 visitors at a time 40 feet into the air, to peek above the waterfall before rushing back to the ground. Tentatively, riders must be 38 inches tall to ride with an adult, or 42



### Jungala begins to take shape.

inches tall to ride alone.

The rich theming continues elsewhere in the land in the form of stilt walkers and other street performers. The Vivi Restaurant has been renovated and will be renamed the Bengal Bistro, while a new eatery, the Orang Café, will also open nearby, all supporting a common village theme.

"There is a very strong conservation message and presence in this area," said Glenn Young, vice president of zoological operations. "We want people to walk away learning about animals and with a respect for the environment. We want people to understand they can make a difference in their daily lives as well."

Of course, animals are not the only focus. Gerard Hoepfner, senior director of communications, points out that because water is a precious commodity, it too needs to be part of conservation efforts. Hence, the waterfall is the "centerpiece in the village," because it distributes water throughout the land and brings life to the other areas.

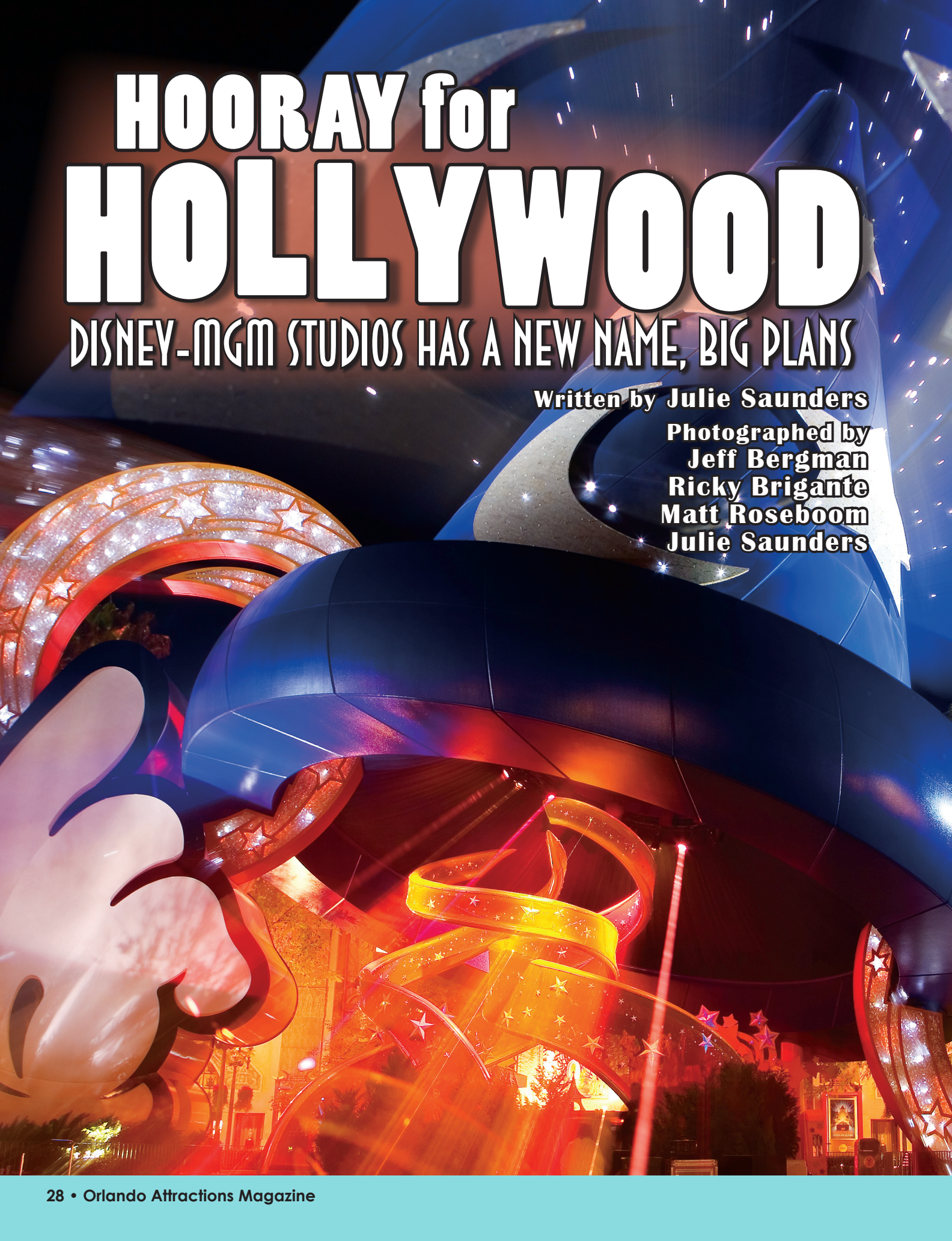
As Park Manager Dan Brown puts it, the show elements shape the landscape "into a mythical place where the inhabitants, both humans and animals, can live in harmony."



**Orangutan exhibit under construction in September, 2007.**

**Follow the construction of Jungala online in our photo gallery & blog at [attractionsmagazine.com](http://attractionsmagazine.com)**





# **HOORAY for HOLLYWOOD**

**DISNEY-MGM STUDIOS HAS A NEW NAME, BIG PLANS**

**Written by Julie Saunders**

**Photographed by**

**Jeff Bergman**

**Ricky Brigante**

**Matt Roseboom**

**Julie Saunders**





**O**n January 6, Disney-MGM Studios officially closed and reopened the next day as Disney's Hollywood Studios. In an Aug. 9, 2007 press release announcing the name change, Walt Disney World President Meg Crofton said, "the new name reflects how the park has grown from representing the golden age of movies to a celebration of the new entertainment that today's Hollywood has to offer – in music, television, movies and theater."

So why did a park located 2,500 miles east of Hollywood that has not been a functioning studio since 2004 adopt a name containing both of these elements?

On May 1, 1989, then Chairman and CEO Michael Eisner, concluded the dedication of the Disney-MGM Studios with, "We welcome you to a Hollywood that never was – and always will be." Looking past the ambiguity, perhaps the intention of these words was to conjure up a state of mind rather than a place or point in time.

Asked about the drivers behind the decision to change the name, vice president of Disney's Hollywood Studios, Michael O'Grattan said, "The name at opening reflected the golden age of Hollywood, however, with the addition of attractions like Rock 'n' Roller Coaster Starring Aerosmith and Star Tours, the park started expanding beyond the golden age of Hollywood. The new name is more descriptive and a natural evolution (not a change in direction) of where we are today and where we are going in the future."



**Michael O'Grattan, vice president of Disney's Hollywood Studios**



With the return to traditional 2D animation in last November's hit Disney movie, *Enchanted*, and the upcoming *The Princess and the Frog*, scheduled for release on Dec. 18, 2009, O'Grattan responded to the possibility of Disney's Hollywood Studio becoming a working studio again by saying he has "no real knowledge" and that the return to a working studio was just speculation. Asked why the animation studio closed in the fall of 2004, O'Grattan said, "The studio was closed in an effort to refocus and reorganize by concentrating our animation resources in one place."

Commenting on how the Pixar brand fits into this new name, O'Grattan said, "Pixar is an important part of our family. We have announced the renaming of Mickey Avenue to Pixar Place and that area will have more of a studio feel with the opening of Toy Story Mania in the summer."

## Is MGM gone with the wind?

O'Grattan stated that the litigious relationship with MGM – who filed lawsuits against Disney's use of the MGM name as far back as 1988 – did not impact the name change. "The decision was made outside of the contract [with MGM]." When asked if this parting of ways would impact The Great Movie Ride, which incorporates



The Pipton sisters from Dallas, Texas were selected as the family of the day on Jan. 7, the day the park officially became Disney's Hollywood Studios. Here they helped "Citizens of Hollywood" actress Madeline Moore start the day.

material from several MGM properties, O'Grattan said, "There is no impact to The Great Movie Ride. Our use of film clips and ride scenes is through a separate contract with MGM."

## On with the show!

Several new attractions and shows are scheduled to open at Disney's Hollywood Studios this year. First up will be Block Party Bash, a high-energy, interactive parade imported from Disney's California

Adventure. The parade will feature 12 floats and showcase 20 characters from Disney-Pixar movies. Block Party Bash was wildly popular in California due to the many opportunities for guests to interact and dance with the performers. There will be two major show stops: at the ABC Theatre and on Hollywood Boulevard. "Our cast is currently doing conditioning work to prepare for the high-energy performance," added O'Grattan.

Of course, the most highly anticipated

## Major Attractions Timeline

### Park Opening

May 1, 1989  
The Great Movie Ride

May 1, 1989  
Backlot Tour

Aug. 25, 1989  
Indiana Jones Epic Stunt Spectacular

Dec. 15, 1989  
Star Tours

May 16, 1991  
Jim Henson's Muppet\*Vision 3-D

Aug. 1991  
Playhouse Disney Live on Stage

Nov. 22, 1991  
Beauty and the Beast Live on Stage

Jan. 7, 1992  
Voyage of the Little Mermaid





addition is Toy Story Mania, which is scheduled to open this summer (see sidebar).

## Tower Power

Original Twilight Zone Tower of Terror cast member and 24-year Walt Disney World veteran, TJ Wollard, could be described as a star. He is the delightfully creepy bellman in the Walt Disney World Travel Channel special who says, "Please do enjoy your stay" just as the elevator doors close. With more than 200 film shots for Tower of Terror to his credit, Wollard is becoming recognized while on the job.

He is also a musician (bassoon) and

actor/director for community and cast theatre productions. Wollard has also worked with Walt Disney Imagineering as a show coach for 23 years, where he instructs new cast members on appropriate guest interactions based on their assigned roles.

Regarding the attraction, Wollard's pride is obvious as

he explains, "After 13 years in operations, The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror is now listed as a classic attraction and is ranked third in guest satisfaction behind Soarin' and Expedition Everest." Not bad for a dilapidated hotel.

Wollard shared the best part about being a Tower of Terror cast member. "On Tuesdays, I get to wander the park and interact with guests all day. It's great because my job is to make people happy."



TJ Wollard's infamous Tower grin

## Prepare for MANIA

Toy Story Mania is scheduled to open

this summer. Often compared to Buzz Lightyear's Space Ranger Spin at the Magic Kingdom, Toy Story Mania has several additional features that put it, well – light years ahead of this forerunner attraction.

Donning special 3-D glasses, riders are "shrunk down" to the size of a toy and then compete in several different video game sequences. As the rider's skill increases, so does the level of play. These interactive elements, combined with 3-D, are aimed at generating rerideability.



## Do two halves make a whole (day)?

Disney's Hollywood Studios is two parks in one, offering both thrill rides and shows. However, if one of these categories doesn't interest you, then the park can be experienced in less than a full day. "Most guests spend a full day here" said O'Grattan. "Lights, Motors, Action! and High School Musical 2 are very popular and our nighttime show, Fantasmic!, is packed to capacity nearly

May 13, 1992  
Fantasmic!

July 22, 1994  
Twilight Zone  
Tower of Terror

April 22, 1999  
Sounds Dangerous  
starring Drew Carey

July 30, 1999  
Rock 'n' Roller  
Coaster Starring  
Aerosmith

Oct. 1, 2001  
Walt Disney:  
One Man's Dream

Nov. 2003 and  
Oct. 2004  
The Magic of  
Disney Animation

May 5, 2005  
Lights, Motors,  
Action! Extreme  
Stunt Show

Dec. 9, 2005  
Journey into  
Narnia: Creating  
The Lion, The Witch  
and the Wardrobe







Guests are greeted at the entrance to Disney's Hollywood Studios by new lettering in the same style as the former sign.

every night.

"We are offering additional guest experiences, like the Jedi Training Academy, and our character offering is 70 percent unique – Disney's Hollywood Studios is the only place you will see characters from Star Wars, Cars, Power Rangers and all of the Playhouse Disney characters. We look at the little and big things."

On the topic of the long-empty ABC Theater and Hunchback of Notre Dame venues, O'Grattan said, "We are actively looking at these locations now and plans are in the works for their future." Responding to why these spaces have stood vacant for so long, O'Grattan said, "We are taking a holistic look to decide our next steps – as part of the re-branding to Disney's Hollywood Studios – to help us determine the right offerings at the right time."



## To Infinity and Beyond

With the new name and re-branding, new opportunities to leverage all types of films, stage and television productions and

songs will potentially be developed for new shows and attractions. O'Grattan summed up his hopes for the future of Disney's Hollywood Studios; "We continue to embrace all of the great, meaningful and exciting things that are a part of our history, while seeking new ways to entertain and delight our guests. Like a family, we value the balance of respecting our ancestors and rejoicing in the arrival of new family members."

Reflecting on the name change, Tower of Terror cast member TJ Wollard said,



**The general design of the park remains the same, even after the name change, as evidenced by the above "before" and "after" versions of a park sign.**

"I feel privileged to have participated in the opening and closing of the Disney-MGM Studios and the opening of Disney's Hollywood Studios. The new name is what this park is all about – elements of songs and stories, both old and new, celebrating the spirit of Hollywood." ●●●●●

**Find more of Disney's  
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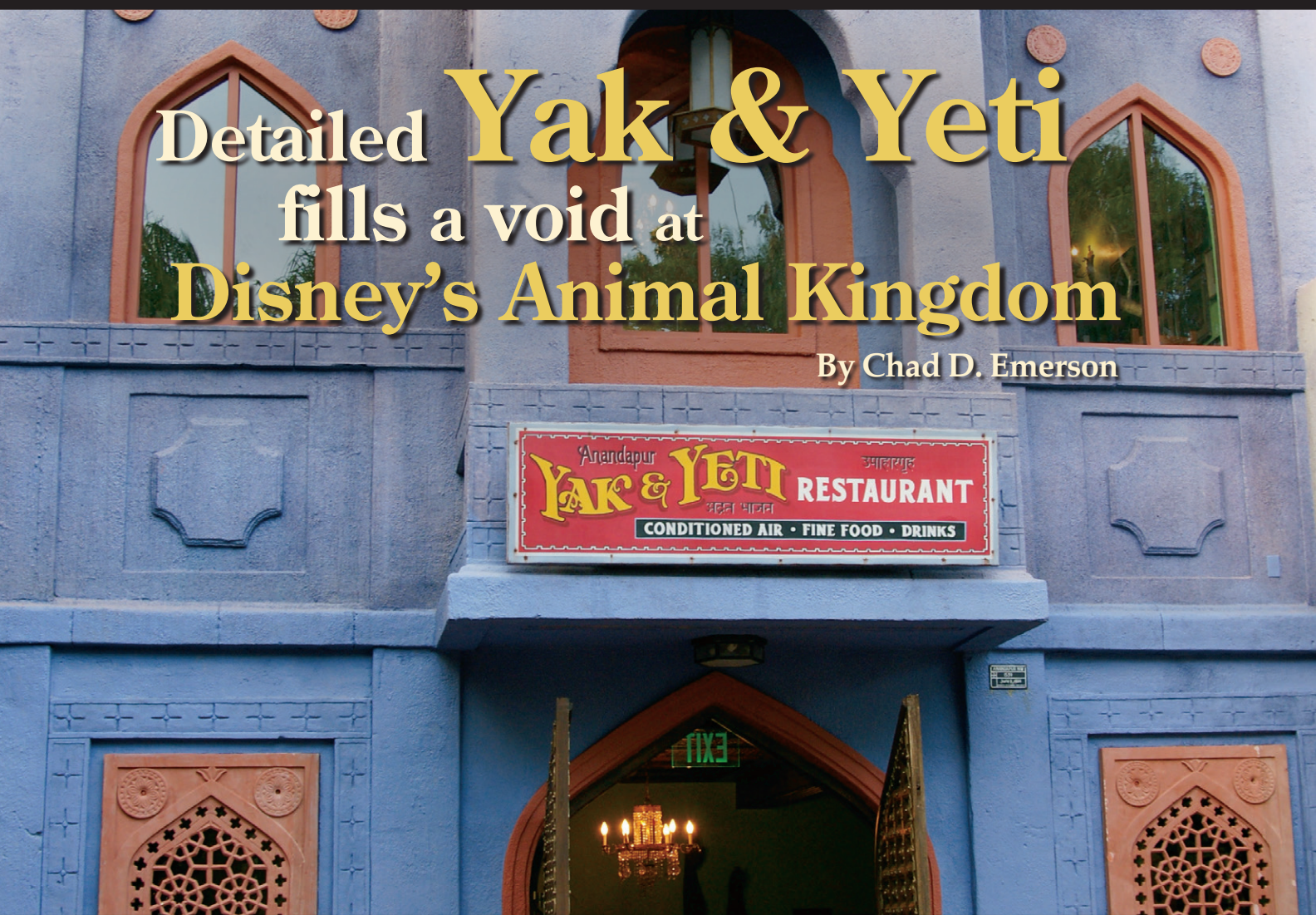
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## Detailed **Yak & Yeti** fills a void at Disney's Animal Kingdom

By Chad D. Emerson



**I**n recent years, Disney's Animal Kingdom has experienced an influx of new attractions with the high-thrill Expedition Everest coaster and Finding Nemo - The Musical leading the way. Yet, even with this multi-million-dollar investment, Animal Kingdom still lacked a major piece to the overall puzzle inside the park — an à la carte table service restaurant. That's now changed with the November opening of the Anandapur Yak & Yeti Restaurant within the Asia section of the park. This highly themed restaurant has embraced Disney's tradition of storytelling.

### A Coincidental Partnership

When Disney was in search of a partner, one of the initial calls went to Landry's Restaurants — a leader in the themed dining market. The decision to work with Landry's was not surprising as the companies had previously collaborated on two Rainforest Cafés, including the one located near Animal Kingdom's front gate.

But, rather than opt for an existing concept (as Disney and Landry are doing with the T-Rex restaurant that is opening at Downtown Disney this fall), the

company went searching for an original idea to lead the Animal Kingdom's table service dining debut. One whose "story line" seamlessly fit into the park's Asia section and, more specifically, nearby Expedition Everest.

Ultimately, Disney and Landry's Restaurants joined forces with Steven Schussler, president of Schussler Creative. Schussler, the brainchild behind the Rainforest Café concept, had been working on an Asian restaurant idea for several years when Disney officials visited his company's Golden Valley, Minn. restaurant lab to discuss adding



a T-Rex to Downtown Disney.

According to Schussler, while visiting, the Disney team noticed a mock set-up of his Asian concept and began a dialogue about bringing the theme to Animal Kingdom. "It was simply a fortunate coincidence that the timing worked out and that the themes worked perfectly together," said Schussler.

Soon, Schussler joined forces with Animal Kingdom creative head Joe Rhode, an executive with Disney's Imagineering group, and Jeff Cantwell, Landry's senior vice president of development who was responsible for the design, development and construction of Yak & Yeti, to integrate his big picture concept into the existing story behind the Asia area. Ultimately, the collaboration culminated with November's grand opening of this unique eatery.

### "Eat-ertainment"

One of the first things a Yak & Yeti guest notices when entering is the extensive amount of Asian theming and props used to develop the dining experience. From replica Chinese artifacts to an authentic handmade Indian staircase, the restaurant's theming adopts a very pan-



**The interior of the restaurant is highly decorated and detailed.**

Asian approach to things. This strategy carries over into the restaurant's menu where dishes range from Vietnamese to Japanese with many other Asian influences in between.

The Yak & Yeti story line is then used to bring the theming and dining together into a complete package. It begins with the idea that the restaurant used to be the Asian home of a fictional proprietor before he fell on hard economic times. To help pay the bills, the owner converted his home into a hotel with a restaurant in front. As the story goes, the popularity of the business quickly convinced locals to open a café (the Yak & Yeti's outdoor quick service restaurant) and a market (the restaurant's adjacent retail shop).

As General

Manager Marty Sherman explains, this detailed story results in an "eat-ertainment" concept — one where the food combines with the theming and merchandise to "create more than a meal, it's an entire experience for the guest."

In fact, according to Sherman, Landry's quickly discovered that this approach, when executed properly, makes the restaurant itself a destination attraction which, in turn, leads to loyal, repeat business.



**The Yak & Yeti Market gift shop features many items with different Yak & Yeti logos.**

### Location Theme

The Yak & Yeti, in the western Himalayan foothills in India and Nepal is located at the major crossroads of two well-traveled hiking trails near the small rural village of Anandapur. The location offers weary trekkers a place to stop and refresh at the cool fountains, grab a quick bite to eat or leave messages for other travelers.



# Restaurant Report



Of course, that's not to say that the Yak & Yeti was an easy venture. Indeed, Sherman notes that, unlike Landry's other partnerships with Disney, dining at the Yak & Yeti requires theme park admission. In addition, since Animal Kingdom closes at different times — even within the same week — the restaurant cannot establish standard operating hours.

However, the flip side is, by being the only a la carte table service restaurant in the park, Sherman is glad to have “thousands of built-in guests who literally walk by the restaurant every day.” This is especially helpful considering the venue's close proximity to the popular, new Expedition Everest ride, also in the Asia section of the park.

## Yak & Yeti Details

The Yak & Yeti offers two floors of indoor dining with a total of 250 seats. This area makes up the table service part of the restaurant where visitors can

select from specialties like Crispy Honey Chicken and Miso Glazed Salmon.

Outside, the quick service portion of the restaurant offers extensive seating with much of it centered around a custom-designed relaxing water feature. The outdoor area also includes a separate beverage window where soft drinks and a variety of Asian beers are available.

The Yak & Yeti complex is complete with the Bhaktapur Market — a small gift shop that offers everything from children's toys to imported silk and other authentic Asian merchandise.

While giving tours of the restaurant, Sherman makes sure to point out the second floor “verandah” dining room where guests, who make reservations during Animal Kingdom's daily parade, are treated to “some of the best views of any Disney parade anywhere — all while enjoying a great meal” (indeed, Sherman's tip was to request Table 106 or another nearby for the best views).



**One of many life-size puppets seen throughout the restaurant.**

All in all, the Yak & Yeti offers a fun dining experience set within an interesting story line, immersive theming, and a diverse menu. In doing so, it fills Animal Kingdom's need for in-park table service dining. ●●●●●

**Visit [attractionsmagazine.com](http://attractionsmagazine.com) for more Yak & Yeti photos.**



**Hostess Jackie stands with fellow cast member Tyrone behind the front desk of the “wealthy merchant's private two-story residence that has been converted to a 250-seat restaurant and hotel.”**

## Disney Detail

“The proprietor of the Anandapur Yak&YetiRestaurant has personally selected all of the artifacts that you see around you. He and his family have traveled all over Southeast Asia collecting unique, unusual and exotic souvenirs. Here you can see examples collected from one end of the Silk Road to the other. So if you are looking for the mysteries of Nepal, the romance of China, the adventure of India or Indonesian enlightenment – just look around you.”

- From a tag on one of the shirts for sale in the Yak & Yeti gift shop.



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# Holiday Wrap Up



While you were wrapping presents, Orlando's theme parks were decking the halls for the holidays.



## Magic Kingdom

Cinderella Castle lit up with thousands of tiny lights, shimmering as if snow had fallen on its towers. On Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, Magic Kingdom guests were treated to extra magic as Jessica Simpson, The Jonas Brothers, favorites from *Dancing with the Stars*, and many more celebrities entertained fans and cameras in Disney's annual Christmas Day Parade taping.



## Epcot and Disney's Hollywood Studios



Epcot's giant tree (far left) represents holidays and cultures from around the world while the Disney-MGM Studios (now Disney's Hollywood Studios) displayed its annual Osbourne Spectacle of Dancing Lights in which millions of lights twinkled to holiday tunes.





## Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure

Grinchmas returned to Islands of Adventure with a new musical show starring the Whos and the Grinch. Woody Woodpecker, Curious George, the Man with the Yellow Hat, Scooby-Doo, and Shaggy performed a holiday show on stage at Universal Studios and a giant inflatable snow family greeted guests as they approached the park.



## Downtown Disney and Disney's Animal Kingdom

Some unusual holiday decorations popped up around Walt Disney World, including a metal monorail-surrounded tree in the Contemporary Resort. Even dinosaurs got into the spirit of the season as tiny T-Rex commanded its Raptor-turned-reindeer in a store display.



## SeaWorld

SeaWorld overlaid its Wild Arctic attraction with a Polar Express theme, complete with a cappella-singing train conductors outside. Shamu is never one to miss out on holiday festivities. He's seen here posing with his Santa hat in front of a sleigh full of goodies.





## New Name, New Era for Downtown Disney area hotel

By Mike Reilley

**T**he Issue: You're planning a trip to Orlando, but where should you stay? There are too many choices. The answer: For your business and personal needs, and fast access to Disney, your all-around best bet could be the Regal Sun Resort.

The Regal Sun Resort has been around for more than a quarter of a century. But wait! If you're familiar with the Orlando area, you're thinking to yourself, "it doesn't sound familiar." You're right, because until recently it was called the Grosvenor Resort.

Under new ownership since 2006, officials at the hotel brought in marketing professionals to discuss a possible name change, according to Steven H. Green, director of sales and marketing.

"Granted, there had been years of branding because the Grosvenor had always been here, but quite simply, it was time for a change," said Green.

Regal comes from its "regal" setting, being on the Disney property, (though not owned by Disney). The Sun in the name comes from being in the sunshine state.

"Being the Regal Sun," said Green, "indicates that we are the brightest resort in the kingdom."

### A Disney Experience

The Regal Sun Resort sits right on Disney property and that means a lot to the hotel and its guests.

"Once they arrive, our guests are



expecting a Disney experience," said Green. "Anywhere we market this resort, we market it as 'The Regal Sun Resort in the Walt Disney World Resort.' We have excellent service standards that we have to uphold and we provide experiences that are a part of the Disney vacation experience for our guests."

All of the Regal Sun employees go through Disney participant training.

### Lobby

When you walk in, you'll notice the flora, the plant arrangements and the charm.

The 24-hour deli to your left has a bit of everything, including Starbucks coffee, Pizza Hut pizza and pre-

made sandwiches. The lobby bar is on your right and is open in the evenings with a big-screen television and karaoke five nights a week.

The lobby also includes an interactive play area for children. There's a plasma TV for movies and interactive games for the kids.

There's an official Disney Store right in



**The hotel's lobby features 24-hour amenities, including coffee and pizza.**



the lobby. "The store handles everything from your packages coming back from the parks to toothbrushes and toothpaste," said Green. "At our guest services desk, you can buy tickets for all the parks and dinner shows, too." Dollar Rent A Car also has a desk in the lobby.

## Your Room

Among the 626 rooms at the Regal Sun Resort are seven suites.

All guest rooms include a mini refrigerator, coffee and coffee maker, flat-screen TV with remote, ice bucket and glasses, and an in-room safe. In-room movies are also available.

One side of the Regal Sun tower is considered the "Disney view." From these rooms you'll see Downtown Disney and beyond to most of the Disney parks, depending on how high up your room is situated.

"On the Disney side you can view fireworks from the parks," added Green. "The other side is called the 'city view,' where you can basically see the downtown Lake Buena Vista area. It's very nice."

## Dining & Kids

If you're one of those who enjoys eating, there are several options.

"If you're relaxing by the pool area around lunch time, the café out there is great for a tasty burger and your favorite beverage," said Green.

The Regal Sun Resort dining highlight is on the mezzanine level. That's where you'll find the Lake View Restaurant and the Horizons Bar.

"It got its Lake View name because while it's on the fifth floor of the hotel, it actually looks over the natural lake behind the hotel and the pool area, so

there are tremendous views."

The Lake View Restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Breakfast offers a full menu or a buffet.

"Dinner offers the guest a great menu, but on Fridays it's our wonderful seafood buffet," said Green. "Our guests rave about it." There's also a brunch buffet on Sunday.

Green says one of the real treats for the kids is the Disney character breakfast three times a week.

"On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings, kids are able to come in with mom and dad and enjoy a breakfast buffet, and Disney characters come in to say hello and spend some time with them," said Green. "It's great one-on-one time for photographs and autographs. They spend time with these characters unlike any time they would at the parks. I was up there the other day and Goofy was walking around and he sat right down with a family and spent some real time with them during breakfast. It's priceless."



**Many of Regal Sun Resort's guest rooms offer a unique view of Downtown Disney.**

## Whodunit?

The Murderwatch Mystery Dinner Theater is a 17-year tradition at the hotel. It happens every Saturday at 6 p.m.

"It's an interactive, sometimes over-reactive, group of performers who engage the audience in a show based on the fact that during the production someone is murdered," said Green. "It could be anyone, including someone in the audience, who committed the crime. The audience is then involved in solving the mystery."



**Guests can sip cocktails in the resyled Eclipse Bar at the Regal Sun Resort.**





**Downtown Disney is just a stone's throw away from the Regal Sun Resort.**

Green stressed that the show is family friendly.

## New Pool Area

During the name change and renovations, the pool area was overhauled.

"We decided to create a pool environment that would be inviting to the guests, plus we wanted to make it so picturesque and unique that it would be great for any outdoor functions and special events," said Green. "We were thinking about receptions, things like that, with a venue that is definitely not your typical hotel pool environment."

The newly designed area includes a beach pool, which gets deeper the farther in you go.

"There's an interactive children's play area and very large rock formation with a waterfall," he added.

## Fun For the Kids

The Regal Sun Resort has a director of fun every day of the week.

"Our director of fun is empowered to

entertain and make sure that our young guests are having a great time," said Green. "So if there are kids here waiting for the bus to go to Disney, there are interactive games that they're playing while they're waiting."

## Business Needs Filled

"We have a total of 19,000 square feet of meeting and conference space, with a 12,000-square-foot ballroom," said Green. "This area is very flexible and divides into many different rooms."

They host a lot of conventions and business meetings at the Regal Sun. And Green says those who are here for business find it refreshing that at the end of their workday, they can merely walk to Downtown Disney.

## Find Out More

Once you get to know the Regal Sun Resort and everything it has to offer, you may find yourself disappointed in the morning when it's time to leave for one

of the Orlando area attractions. But don't worry; at the end of your exciting day, it'll be here waiting for you, with plenty more to do.

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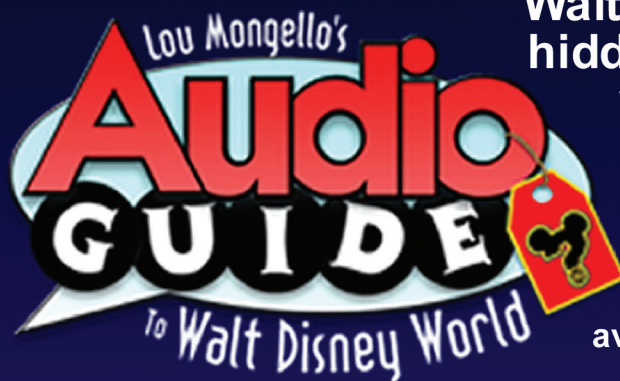




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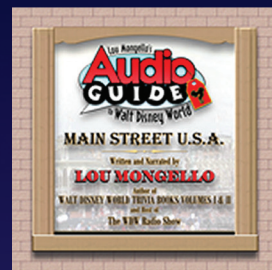
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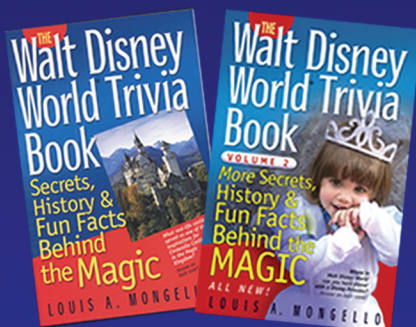
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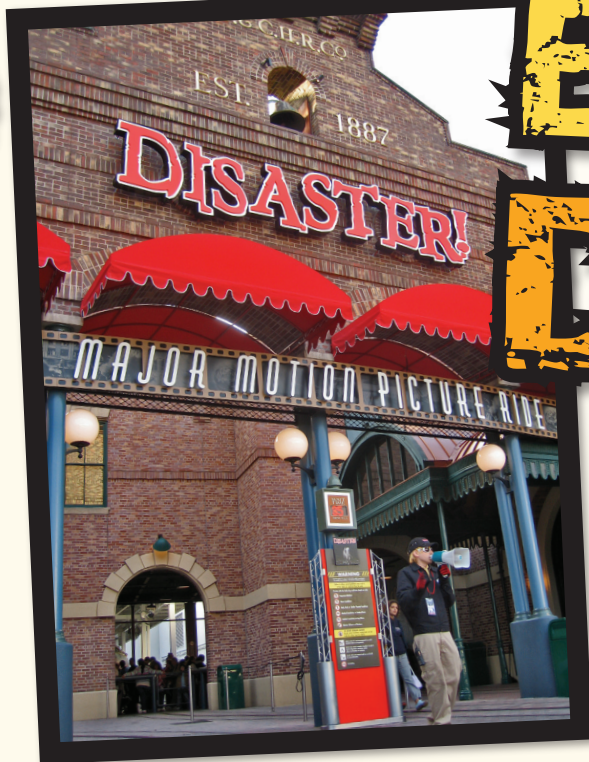


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# Earthquake becomes a Disaster!

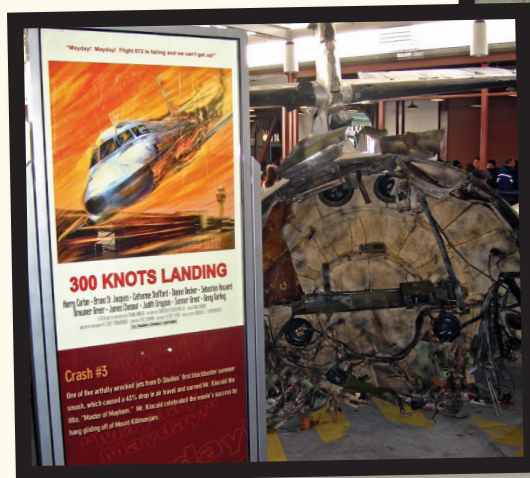
## FOR UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

Written by  
Jennifer  
Fickley-Baker

**T**he latest attraction at Universal Studios, Disaster! A Major Motion Picture Ride ... Starring You, recently opened at the movie-themed park.

The attraction, which replaced Earthquake in the San Francisco area of the park, has been overlaid with new theming, an enhanced story line, and high-tech pre-show special effects that leave guests wondering about the wizardry behind it all.

"The new story line is based on the premise of a boutique movie studio within Universal Studios' property that's operated by Frank Kinkaid, a world-famous movie producer/director from Disaster Studios," explains Project Manager Jeff Smith. "The new attraction follows a similar story line as the previous attraction – the movie studio is making [a new



**WITH FILMS LIKE "300 KNOTS LANDING" THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF AIRPLANE WRECKAGE AT DISASTER STUDIOS.**

film called "Mutha Nature," starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson] and is looking for a few good volunteers to help out."

As the guests enter the queue line, they'll get the chance to explore some large-scale movie props from some of the fictional Kinkaid's previous Disaster films. Once inside, they're introduced to Lonnie, a live actor who

portrays Frank Kinkaid's assistant and guides the group through the pre-show.

"Lonnie puts the story line out there of recruiting guests from the crowd to assist in making this new Disaster picture as extras," Smith says. "Then the next scene is where we really take things up several notches, where you are introduced to Mr. Kinkaid. He



comes out on stage and [during] the whole scene he's speaking to the crowd, describing his background, what this new picture is all about, and how great it is for everyone to be here."

But this is no ordinary actor – it's a realistic projection of a character portrayed by actor Christopher Walken that's achieved using cutting-edge technology from Musion, a United Kingdom-based company that specializes in creating 3-D and holographic projection special effects. The technology that's used in Disaster! is based on an old magician's illusion called Pepper's Ghost, which produces 3-D illusions through the use of lights, angles and hidden mirrors (Musion's version also includes the use of digital projection equipment). In this case, the effect has been applied so the Kinkaid character appears on stage to interact with Lonnie, even moving props on the stage.



**"DAS SCHURKE" IS HALF-SHARK, HALF-SUBMARINE... AND ALL-CREEPY**

According to Smith, the Musion technology enabled his team to develop a whole new level of guest-cast interactivity for the attraction.

"The Musion effect that we have in that space has never been done before on this scale on a permanent basis," he says. "We're certainly the first park in the U.S. that's done anything on



**DISASTER STUDIOS' "FILMS" ARE PROMOTED THROUGHOUT**

this scale with this technology in this manner. Obviously, Pepper's Ghost has been done a long time, but our goal, and we believe that we've pulled it off very well, is that suspension between virtual and real. Taking A-list talent that we have in this attraction and taking the technology and combining the two gives the guests an experience they can't get anywhere else."

After the pre-show, guests embark on a movie-making experience very similar to the previous Earthquake attraction, by boarding subway vehicles that pull into a mock underground subway tunnel set. Then it's lights, camera, action as the movie cameras roll and guests are bombarded with a flood of special effects, including earthquake tremors, a ceiling collapse and floods of water.

The attraction is receiving some



**"APOCAGEDDON" DOESN'T HAVE SAPPY MOMENTS. JUST ACTION.**

great guest feedback so far.

"I spend quite a bit of time, as has the team, in the building watching the guests' reactions and the reactions have been really wonderful," Smith said. "People enjoy the experience and having the Lonny character involved with the guests as well as all the crew members. It's very exciting. I just came from a show a half-an-hour ago and people were immediately participating. I think the guest reaction has been very positive." ●●●●●



# AMUSEMENT PARK

by John Green  
& Pat Lewis



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# PUZZLES

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M W T U I E C E C L A S R N Y U G W  
S R A P U T S I D I L O Z G Z W M I  
X B S M P J H W O N L G O F L C A G  
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F I T M S F N C U I Q Y E D T A Q I  
P Y G T O U Y E Z R J K E U G T U Q  
R P I G A H O K R K K G H B N C I R  
W U B O A P C H B A R T U O E H M I  
C Y H J W M S J L A B F L C H Y B P  
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# Amusement Park Expo Returns To Orlando

The annual IAAPA Expo was held in Orlando in 2007, showcasing the latest rides, entertainment and more.

The annual Attractions Expo held by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) is the mecca for new, exciting and unusual advancements in the world of attractions and theme park entertainment technology. From themed set designers to big-name roller coaster manufacturers, the IAAPA Expo is the place for amusement park owners and vendors to seek out, buy and sell new products to improve their parks.

Popular exhibits in 2007's Expo included many different versions of indoor blacklight mini-golf and several

portable 3D theaters. Arcade-style video games dominated a corner of the Expo, with nearly every game, from first-person shooters to sports action, equipped with widescreen, high-definition displays.

The IAAPA Attractions Expo is open only to trade professionals for the first few days of its operation. On the final day, the general public is allowed in, for a small entry fee to enjoy free arcade games and rides all day long.

The Expo will be returning to Orlando in November 2008 before it heads west to Las Vegas in 2009.



## Look out!

One of the most eye-catching booths at the IAAPA Expo was this new take on the classic shooting gallery. Here, Lego characters guide you as you fire your laser gun at Egyptian-themed items. But watch out, they squirt water back at you!

## IAAPA at a Glance

The IAAPA convention is always massive, taking up the Orlando Convention Center's largest halls for several days. Attendees wanting to visit every booth and attraction within the convention can expect to walk over 8 miles.

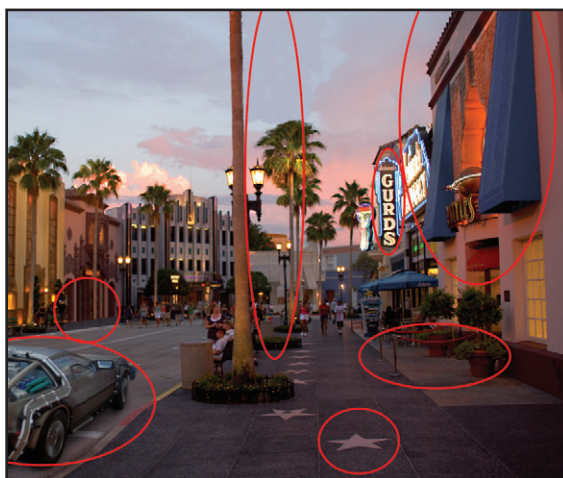


## PUZZLE ANSWERS

### WORD SEARCH

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## Attraction News from Outside the Orlando Area

By Andy Guinigundo

### Disneyland Dream Suite to Open



**Anaheim, Calif.** – Beginning Jan. 31, in continuation of the Year of a Million Dreams, guests will be chosen to spend a night in Disneyland Park. Each day some lucky visitors will stay in a dream suite conceived by Walt Disney himself. During the development of the park, Disney spent many nights in a small private apartment above the Fire House on Main Street, U.S.A. He had planned a larger, more lavish apartment big enough to entertain friends, family and VIPs. In a random selection process, Disney guests and mail-in entries will live that dream in 2008.

### Kalahari Sandusky Soon to be Largest Indoor Park



**Sandusky, Ohio** – The Kalahari Resort at Wisconsin Dells, Wis. is currently the largest indoor water park in the country at 125,000 square feet. Its sister park in Ohio is set to surpass it at 173,000 square feet. The newly expanded park that was to open in December, boasts two Flow Rider surfing areas and a 12,000-square-foot wave pool. Perhaps the best part is transforming a frigid northern Ohio winter into an Orlando-like 80 degrees.

### Six Flags Friends Pays Tribute to Soldiers

**New York, N.Y.** – Six Flags Friends is the philanthropic arm of Six Flags, Inc. Its mission is to reach out to the community and make a difference in the world using the parks as their vehicle. In December, they announced an initiative to "Salute the Troops." The program will feature a special area in three different Six Flags parks that will include messages from the troops to family, friends and the public. There is also a way for the public to deliver messages to the troops. For more information, visit [www.sixflags.com/SaluteToOurTroops](http://www.sixflags.com/SaluteToOurTroops).

### Astroland Set to Open in 2008

**Brooklyn, N.Y.**

– As reported in our last issue, Astroland's future wasn't certain as the 2007 season ended. However, an agreement was reached and Astroland is slated to open at noon on March 16 when the president of the Brooklyn Borough initiates the Cyclone's first seasonal run by breaking a bottle of authentic Brooklyn chocolate egg cream against the coaster's lead car. What will occur in 2009 and beyond is unclear, but for now the classic thrills go on.



### Universal Park to Open in Seoul

**Seoul, South Korea** – In November, The Associated Press reported that Universal Parks and the Gyeonggi province of South Korea have agreed on plans for a Universal theme park and resort to be built outside Seoul. Reportedly the park will carry a price tag of \$3.1 billion. The park will join a family of Universal Parks that includes Hollywood, Orlando and Japan. Development is ongoing for more international parks. The South Korean park is to open in 2012.

### Four New Languages for 'It's a Small World'

**Hong Kong** – Hong Kong Disneyland will soon open It's a Small World. When it does, Cantonese, Putonghua, Korean, and Filipino

Tagalog will be intertwined with the classic melody. In October, 16 children from the four regions were chosen to record the new parts of the song. These children were chosen in a three-month-long talent search. Disney Imagineers were hoping to match the "innocence" in the voices of the original soundtrack. The new ride will be the first to feature stereo audio. The new voices will be heard in an expanded Asian section of the ride.

### New Mark VII Monorails



**Anaheim, Calif.** – A new shiny, deep-red monorail arrived at the Disneyland Resort with a style reminiscent of the original Disneyland monorail design of the 1960s. Guests will begin riding the new monorail in March. Two additional Mark VII monorails will also make their way to Disneyland in 2008.

### Corner Stone Laid at Ferrari Park Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

– Many dignitaries, including Luca di Montezemolo, the president of Ferrari, attended a corner stone laying ceremony at the future site of The Ferrari Theme Park on Nov. 3, 2007. The corner stone included a time capsule containing a Ferrari piston and park concept art to be re-opened in 2047 to coincide with Ferrari's 100th anniversary. The park, expected to open in 2009, will feature 24 attractions including roller coasters and a real race circuit to be used for the inaugural Abu Dhabi F1 Grand Prix in 2009.

### SeaWorld Killer Whale Dies Unexpectedly

**San Antonio, Texas** – Several sources reported that Taku, a 14-year-old killer whale died unexpectedly in October. The whale had been showing signs of infection for three days prior to its death, but had reportedly been responding to treatment. The cause of death may take weeks to determine. Five killer whales remain at SeaWorld, San Antonio.





Even professional speedsters like Lightning McQueen (from the hit Disney/Pixar animated film *Cars*) needs some rest and relaxation every once in a while. Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground makes a perfect spot for a disguise. Surrounded by some of the world's best golf courses, McQueen takes a step away from the racing limelight to lay off the throttle and take in Orlando's sun and gentle breeze while exchanging his famous catch-phrase, "Kachow!", for the more modest, "Fore!". Watch out for those flying golf balls, Lightning. They might scratch your paint.

In reality, this custom golf cart was spotted at Fort Wilderness just outside a guest's vacation trailer.

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